

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Green Organics



#### Why can't you put grass, oleanders and palm fronds and what are we supposed to do with them?

Grass, oleanders and palm fronds don't compost well and can hinder or contaminate the composting process. Here's some information about why they aren't collected with green organics and what you can do with them:

**Grass** – Grass presents operational challenges in the form of fire hazards, odor control and pesticide contamination. Grass clippings should be bagged and placed in your black/green trash bin for regular weekly collection. Bagged grass may also be placed out during your mixed bulk collection weeks or taken to the transfer station (Tempe provides free use of two convenient transfer station locations – visit [www.tempe.gov/recycling](http://www.tempe.gov/recycling) for address, hours of operation and other information). You can also leave your grass on your lawn in a process called grasscycling. When cut properly, this returns much-needed moisture and nutrients to the soil. [Click here](#) for more information.

**Oleanders** – Due to their toxicity, oleanders are not recommended for composting and should be placed out during mixed bulk collection weeks or taken to the transfer station.

**Palm fronds/debris** – Tough, strappy material like palm fronds doesn't break down easily or react the way other green waste material does through the natural composting process. Like oleanders, palm fronds should be placed out during mixed bulk collection or taken to a transfer station. Important note: If you use a professional service to trim your palm trees, the most efficient way to manage the palm fronds and debris left behind is to have them hauled away by the company that does the trimming. This greatly reduces the impact on our city collection and disposal services and positively impacts the appearance of your neighborhood streets and alleys.

#### Where does the material go after it's picked up?

The green organic material collected is taken to the city's composting yard located at Priest and Rio Salado.



## Why can't I put the material into plastic bags?

Plastic bags are not compostable and are a hazard to employees who try to pick them up or remove them from the compost pile.

## How does composting work and how long does it take?

[Click here](#) to learn more about Tempe's composting process.

## What does the city do with the compost?

The city uses the compost on its golf courses, at parks, schools and community gardens. It is also given away to residents during the city's Zero Waste Day.

## How can I get the city's compost?

Compost is handed out to residents at both Zero Waste Day events, which take place in November and April. It is also given out occasionally at community events.

## What happens when the green organics pile gets mixed with the bulk trash pile?

Unfortunately, if the green pile gets mixed with the bulk pile, or if the green pile is contaminated in any way, all the material goes to the landfill. That's why it is so important to keep the piles separate. Residents with alleys can help keep their green piles free of contamination by waiting to put out their material until the weekend before their scheduled pickup week. And remember to report illegal dumping by calling 480.350.4311 or submitting a report at [www.tempe.gov/311](http://www.tempe.gov/311).

## What happens if I miss my scheduled green organics pick-up?

Residents have a few options for missed pickups.

1. **Drop off material for free at one of two transfer stations:** Tempe residents have access to two transfer stations for delivering bulk trash - up to 2,000 pounds, twice per month - at no charge:

Sky Harbor Regional Transfer Station  
2425 S. 40th Street, Phoenix



Lone Butte Transfer Station  
1000 S. Kyrene Road, Chandler

2. **Call for service:** For a small fee, residents can request a Bulk Trash or Green Organics pickup outside of their regular schedule. Call 480.350.4311 for more information or to schedule a pickup.

### **What happens if the material goes to the landfill instead of to the compost yard?**

Material that ends up in the landfill doesn't do anything – it just sits there, taking up space. Green organics that are composted are recycled and put back into the earth, where they belong.

### **Can I make my own compost?**

Yes. [Click here](#) for information on how to create your own compost at home.